10: d'Orleans--290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 344

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "Our boatmen stop on the right side at a bamboo landing stage, a staircase cut in the bank leads to an edifice built upon piles and surrounded by large trees. It is a good sized house made of strong wood, with a gallery round it and a kind of kiosk in front, the walls and posts are painted green and red, or green and white; the roof is covered with bamboo thatch, and from its centre floats the tricoloured flag. We have arrived at the French Consulate, which contains the office of the company. M. Massie, and his second in command, M. Counillon, live here, and the surrounding houses are occupied by Cambodian interpreters; we are received with open arms and lodged in the Consulate."

23: Franck--304 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 344

"The king's palace is a building mainly in French style, more like a hotel with a steeple-cupola than the abode of an Oriental potentate. It stands in a fairly spacious yard, not quite large enough to be worthy the name of park, on the eastern bank of the Mekong, at the foot of the hill graced by Buddha's footprint, and it was somewhat in disorder. Chairs were kicking about the foreign-style dining-room, and there were other suggestions of a late party and over-sleeping servants. The building was quite new, it seemed; there were few decorations on the walls yet, though a man had come all the way from Paris to cover them with paintings. Evidently he had found the climate not conducive to constant work, particularly work paid for by the day by a protected people; for surely he could not have discovered a means of squandering his time in the social amenities of the king's harem, and there was no other means of accounting for his Oriental leisureliness of execution."

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne du Voyageur. 175*
114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
● 344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.